

# First Record in Victoria of Rice Cut Grass *Leersia oryzoides* (L.) Swartz

by MARGARET G. CORRICK, BOTANY GROUP, FNCV

On 3 March, 1974 two collections of *Leersia oryzoides* (L.) Swartz (Rice Cut Grass) were made from the Yarra River about 2 kilometres downstream from Bend of Islands near the site for the wall of the proposed Yarra Brae Dam. It was also observed on the same day at Bend of Islands.

Vickery (1975: page 276) records this species as a "rare introduction" to Australia, the only N.S.W. collection being from Leeton in 1959. There are no Australian collections of this species in the National Herbarium, Melbourne and apparently it has not been recorded previously in Victoria. It is native to North America, Europe and Japan.

It is a strong-growing, rhizomic perennial forming large, loose tufts or patches. The culms are up to 1.5 metres long and have conspicuous hairy nodes; the leaves are a bright yellow-green, flat, 8-30 cm long, 5-15 mm wide, with scabrous margins. The upper leaf sheaths are also scabrid, and the whole plant feels rough to the touch. The papery ligule is about 1 mm long. The strong growth habit excludes other plants from the clumps and the bright yellow-green colour contrasts strongly with the duller greens of *Paspalum distichum* (Water Couch) and *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed), which are also plentiful in similar situations in the area. The panicle is loose and open,

with slender flexuous branches. Spikelets are one flowered, with glumes reduced to a narrow rim at the tip of the pedicel. The lemma is semi-elliptic-oblong and fringed on the keel with stiff hairs.

Hubbard (1954: p. 347) comments that (in England) with average spring and summer temperatures the panicles remain enclosed within, or become only partially exerted from the leaf sheaths, and under such conditions the spikelets are cleistogamous; in warm seasons the panicles are completely exerted with large anthers hanging from the gaping lemmas so that cross pollination may take place. Illustrations and descriptions appear in both Hubbard (p. 346) and Hitchcock (1935: p. 559).

On 1 February, 1976, a second visit was made to the site, and the grass was observed to have spread considerably, but was not in flower at this time. There were large patches on both banks of the river and also at several spots in the stream bed. It is apparent that most of the patches observed would be submerged when the river level is high. It is also evidently palatable to cattle, as it has been heavily grazed wherever it was growing within their reach. Small areas were also seen growing downstream near the bridge at Warrandyte.

Considering the popularity of this part of the Yarra it is remarkable

Opposite: *Leersia oryzoides* (L.) Swartz  
a — plant; b — panicle; c — node; d — ligule;  
e — spikelet; f — grain.

a, d, and e drawn from MEL 503210  
b, e, and f drawn from MEL 503209

that this occurrence of *Leersia oryzoides* has not been recorded previously.

Two collections are lodged with the National Herbarium, Melbourne: M. G. Corrick, 3 March, 1974, No. 3914 (MEL503209) and M. G. Corrick, 1 February, 1976, No. 5401 (MEL 503210).

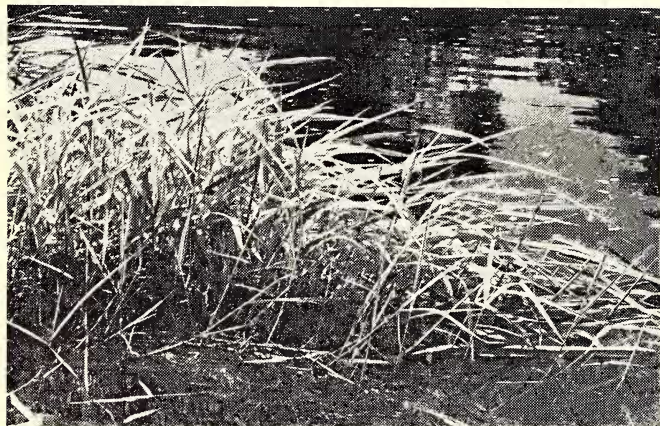
#### Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank the National Her-

barium, Melbourne for permission to check records, and Rex Filson for his fine botanical drawing.

#### REFERENCES

- Hitchcock, A. S., 1935. Manual of the Grasses of the United States. U.S. Government Printing Office, revised edition 1951, 1051 pages.
- Hubbard, C. E., 1954. Grasses. Penguin Books. 2nd edition reprinted 1972, 463 pages.
- Vickery, J. W., 1975. Flora of New South Wales, No. 19 (Gramineae), Suppl. to Pt. 1, Pt. 2, 306 pages.



Rice Cut Grass  
*Leersia oryzoides*  
In the Yarra River  
at Warrandyte.

## The Origin of Generic Names of the Victorian Flora Part 2 – Latin, Greek and Miscellaneous

(Continued from page 30)

BY JAMES A. BAINES

#### ADDENDUM

At the end of the entry for *Machaerina* ('Vic. Nat.' Vol. 93, p. 28), add to 'Willis retains them in *Cladium*', the words 'but in the Supplement to the 2nd edition of 'Handbook to Plants in Victoria' Vol. I, p. 438, he mentions S. T. Blake's adoption (1969) of the name *Baumea* for most Australian species formerly included in *Cladium*, including all Victorian species except *C. procerum*,

and the new combinations are listed; these have now gained general acceptance.

'*Baumea* was named by Gaudichaud-Beaupré in 1829, probably after Antoine Baumé (1728-1904), a French chemist, inventor of a hydrometer. Japanese botanist Koyama's revision (1956) took up *Machaerina*, published by Danish botanist Vahl in 1806 (posthumously, as he died in 1804).'